

minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. POLIQUIN. Mr. Speaker, 2 years ago, right here, I congratulated our New England Patriots on winning their fourth Super Bowl championship. Today I am proud to share the excitement of my fellow Mainers to congratulate our Patriots on capturing their fifth world championship.

Mr. Speaker, on Sunday night, more than 100 million football fans from around the world witnessed the greatest comeback in Super Bowl history. Against an outstanding Atlanta Falcons team, our mighty Patriots battled back from 25 points down with only 17 minutes left to play.

Now, our Patriots, Mr. Speaker, showed the world what can be achieved if you work together and you never give up. We in Congress, all of us, can learn from that example.

Coach Belichick, you have earned your place in history as the greatest coach in NFL history. And co-captain Brady, you, sir, have earned your place as the greatest quarterback of all time.

Mr. Speaker, Maine is so proud of all of our New England Patriots, and I humbly congratulate them. I will see everybody on this team at the White House this spring.

NATIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELING WEEK

(Mr. LANGEVIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Speaker, in recognition of National School Counseling Week and in honor of the many dedicated school counselors in Rhode Island and across the Nation, every day, school counselors are out on the front lines helping our students navigate their educational and career pathways. They provided advice and support during the most formative years of students' lives, helping them develop the skills to succeed in school, in the workforce, and in life.

Unfortunately, in too many schools across the country, students do not have access to school counselors and counselors do not have the resources they need to do their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, it is Congress' responsibility to provide schools and counselors with the funding that they need to properly educate and guide our Nation's youth.

In recognition of National School Counseling Week, I ask my colleagues to join me in renewing our promise to fulfill that responsibility. Our students, Mr. Speaker, are depending on us.

SERVING THE NEEDS OF VETERANS WITH SNAP

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak on behalf of the veterans that have made incredible sacrifices for our country. Our Nation must ensure that they have access to resources that they need to be successful in civilian life. This certainly includes access to nutritious food.

Out of the 22 million veterans in the United States, about 1.7 million are in households that currently participate in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP. Approximately 46 percent of our veterans are senior citizens, including those who served in World War II, Korea, or Vietnam.

Veterans of all ages may also have widely varying levels of disabilities or limitations. Veteran advocacy groups are focused on obtaining a veteran's earned benefits. Often veterans are not connected to SNAP right away and they should be.

As the Agriculture Committee prepares to reauthorize SNAP, we must remain vigilant in our dedication to serve those who have given so much in defense of our Nation. SNAP cannot solve all of the challenges a veteran faces, but it can be a vital component of serving eligible veterans once they return home.

REDUCTION IN STUDENT LOANS FOR STEM MAJORS

(Mr. SOTO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. SOTO. Mr. Speaker, here in America, we are changing the world with our ingenuity and technological advances.

It is our creative and innovative spirit that allows us to continue to be a leader in the world economy and raise the quality of life of the human race. We know that jobs of the present and the future will require many new students and retrained workers to pursue STEM degrees—those in science, technology, engineering, and math.

While many politicians have talked a good game about encouraging students to pursue these degrees, it is time to put our money where our mouth is. Today I introduced the ASPIRE Act, H.R. 926, the American Science Principal and Interest Reduction and Employment Act. This act would grant a 25 percent reduction in student loans for any student who graduates with a STEM major.

According to the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, one million new STEM jobs are projected to come online between 2012 to 2022, for a total of 9 million, 13 percent growth over the decade. This means we must act now to meet these needs, and I encourage all of you to cosponsor this important legislation.

It is time to create real incentives to encourage our students to aspire to new heights and create the jobs of tomorrow today.

EDUCATION REFORM

(Mr. ALLEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ALLEN. Mr. Speaker, back in 2015, Congress passed one of the most significant education reform legislation in decades. Even more impressive than repealing No Child Left Behind, scaling back the role of the Secretary of Education and restoring authority back to the States and local school districts was the fact that this legislation was bipartisan, bicameral, and signed into law by President Obama.

But even so, this couldn't exempt our States and schools from the watchful eyes of Washington. President Obama's Department of Education unsurprisingly went over the line by expanding his authority, a role that Congress clearly did not allow for in the law.

That is why today I am delighted to see the House pass H.J. Res. 57 because we have to make the Department of Education follow the law as it was intended by Congress. The Every Student Succeeds Act was written to stop Federal micromanagement of our schools, and Congress is ensuring that that happens. For the last time, Washington bureaucrats do not belong in the classroom.

TRUMP SIDES WITH RUSSIA IN COMMENTS ON UKRAINE

(Ms. KAPTUR asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I rise today regarding President Trump's strange admiration for Russia's President Vladimir Putin. Our President seems to side with Russia over Ukraine and is defaulting to tyranny over liberty.

Despite ample evidence from our defense community and European allies, President Trump still casts doubt on whether Moscow is backing Russian forces who have killed over 10,000 innocent Ukrainians and who recently killed at least eight more Ukrainian soldiers and 40 civilians and turned off water and electricity in the invaded region.

When Bill O'Reilly asked our President if he respected Putin, a known killer, the President replied: "There are a lot of killers. You think our country's so innocent?"

The President equates Mr. Putin's actions with those of our country. It is not the first time this has happened.

Every time President Trump says something Putin likes, it is broadcast on Kremlin-owned propaganda machines like RT. This is a dangerous threat to liberty.

President Trump openly admires and appeases Putin, whose tenure is known for human rights abuses, brutal suppression of political dissent, and mysterious deaths of journalists and political opponents, like Vladimir Kara-

Murza who wrote a letter critical of Putin to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee regarding the nomination of Secretary Tillerson. Last Thursday, while in Moscow, he fell into a life-threatening coma believed to be caused by an unknown poison.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to normalize what President Trump is doing. We cannot afford to take our country back to an era of unchecked Russian aggression.

We need freedom. That is what is at stake.

I include in the RECORD a February 6, 2017, article by Julie Hirschfeld Davis.

[Feb. 6, 2017]

TRUMP SEEMS TO SIDE WITH RUSSIA IN
COMMENTS ON UKRAINE

(By Julie Hirschfeld Davis)

WASHINGTON.—President Trump cast doubt on whether Moscow is backing separatists engaged in the recent escalation of fighting in eastern Ukraine, appearing to side with President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, who has long denied involvement in the conflict despite evidence to the contrary.

Mr. Trump said he did not take offense at the outbreak of a lethal bout of fighting in Ukraine that came within a day of a phone conversation he had with Mr. Putin, saying of the recent clashes, “we don’t really know exactly what that is.”

“They’re pro-forces,” Mr. Trump said of the Ukrainian separatists in an interview that aired on Monday on “The O’Reilly Factor,” on Fox News. “We don’t know, are they uncontrollable? Are they uncontrolled? That happens also. We’re going to find out; I would be surprised, but we’ll see.”

Mr. Trump’s comments were the latest indication that his desire for warmer relations with Russia may be coloring his view of the conflict in Ukraine, which pits the country’s military—trained and equipped in part by the United States Army—against Russian-backed separatists. Moscow has denied involvement in the three-year conflict, despite evidence that it has provided equipment and fighters to support separatist forces in eastern Ukraine.

The president’s push for a friendlier relationship with Mr. Putin has alarmed Ukrainian officials, who fear that the pressure former President Barack Obama applied on Russia to withdraw its unacknowledged military forces from eastern Ukraine will wane.

A telephone call Mr. Trump held on Saturday with President Petro O. Poroshenko of Ukraine raised further questions about his position on the conflict and his administration’s commitment to maintaining sanctions against Russia for the annexation of Crimea.

In an official account of the call, Mr. Trump had said he was willing to work with Kiev and Moscow to resolve the conflict. But the statement referred to helping to “restore peace along the border,” while the violence has been playing out inside eastern Ukraine.

UF HEALTH SHANDS HOSPITAL
PEDIATRIC HEART TRANSPLANT
PROGRAM

(Mr. YOHO asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. YOHO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the University of Florida’s UF Health Shands Hospital pediatric heart transplant program for being named one of the best in the Nation. According to the Scientific Registry of

Transplant Recipients, this unit has had zero pediatric heart transplant deaths in the last 2½ years.

Since 2006, the UF Health Shands Transplant Center has performed a total of 120 pediatric heart and lung transplants, making it one of the most active pediatric heart transplant programs in the Southeast. In fact, in the last year, U.S. News and World Report named UF Health number one in the State and fourth in the Nation for pediatric heart surgeries and cardiology. This recognition speaks volumes about the level of care shown by the physicians and their teams at UF Health, and I look forward to watching them continue to be a leader in patient care and innovation in the coming years.

I must end with Go Gators.

PULL THE MUSLIM BAN DOWN

(Ms. JACKSON LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE. Mr. Speaker, let me again repeat my concern, when the United States is compared to the thuggish behavior of Russian leadership, the attempt to poison individuals who are activists and opponents to that kind of oppression.

But I want to speak today to what is impacting our neighbors, Mr. Speaker, and that is the executive order that has been issued by the President of the United States. I want to dispel any myth that Members of this body who oppose the executive order are against security for this Nation.

I am a years-long member of the Homeland Security Committee, the Transportation Security Committee, the Border Security Committee, and work hard to write a stiff border security bill. But, frankly, this is a Muslim ban, and when a 17-year-old, 16-year-old from my community, from Jordan, was stopped and held for 48 hours and shipped to Chicago, that is a Muslim ban.

What I say to those who have executed it is that you have to realize that the order that you tried to copy from President Obama was not the same. It was stringent review; it was not rejection. You are rejecting Muslims and allowing others.

As a Christian, I know that Christians are not being subjected to the same kind of scrutiny. This is a Muslim ban. I ask the White House, as we go to court this evening: Why don’t you reconsider and pull that Muslim ban down?

□ 1730

WHAT HAS WASHINGTON DONE TO
YOU?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker’s announced policy of January 3, 2017, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Speaker, well, let’s see, I got a phone call from my district—one of several dozen today—and they all are kind of about the same thing: What is going on in Washington? What are they doing in Washington? What is happening? What is happening with ObamaCare, the Affordable Care Act? What are they going to do about this wall? People are concerned. People want to know what is happening in Washington.

I suspect a good many of us are trying to figure out what the next steps are. It seems like every other moment something new is erupting from the White House, another tweet or another executive order, and we have had a lot of them. And so what I want to do today is to kind of go back and take a look at what has transpired over these last 2½ weeks. What has happened in Washington these last 2½ weeks?

Besides a lot of confusion, angst, and concern, some very, very important things are happening, and here is my take on it. I am going to kind of put a title on today, and I am going to say: What has Washington done to you, not for you. What has Washington done to you?

Let’s start with the very first day that President Trump was inaugurated. Well, it was all about the Affordable Care Act, otherwise known as ObamaCare. So he set out to begin the repeal of ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act.

Oh, by the way, they are one and the same. It depends which way you are looking at this thing, but the repeal of the Affordable Care Act has dire consequences on Americans.

Some 30 million Americans could be affected, according to the Congressional Budget Office, or in my State, we are looking at maybe 5 million people could lose their health coverage, their insurance, as a result of that. There is \$16 billion that immediately flows to the State of California for the expansion of the Medicaid, Medi-Cal program in California. That would be gone. And those people that are on that program would simply not be able to get care.

It goes beyond just those who are in the exchanges. The exchange in California is working quite well. Maybe a 1½ million people in California are covered through the exchange, and they have options in most every part of the State.

In my part of the State, there are some shortcomings because services are not readily available, but there are 34 clinics managed by nine organizations that provide medical services in my district. Every one of those clinics rely upon ObamaCare, or the Affordable Care Act, for the services that they render. If the Affordable Care Act disappears, we repeal ObamaCare, those clinics are out of business.

And what does that mean? It means that thousands, literally hundreds of thousands of people in my district would no longer be receiving medical